

CALUM MILLER MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24th July 2026

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

I do not believe that the Home Office has made a compelling case for its proposal to expand Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre.

The Home Office has relied heavily on the assertion that there is a national need for additional immigration detention capacity, and that this need justifies the proposed expansion of Campsfield House. However, despite repeatedly requesting evidence to substantiate this claim, I have received only general assurances from the Home Office that additional capacity is required. No numerical data or objective analysis has been provided to support this assertion.

In particular, the Home Office has not disclosed the current occupancy and turnover in the existing Immigration Removal Centres; the modelling used to predict future demand on detention centres; or assessments of alternatives to increase detention capacity.

Planning decisions should be based on robust, transparent and independently verifiable evidence, not on asserted claims. Until clear evidence of need has been provided and subjected to proper scrutiny, I do not believe it is reasonable to conclude that the expansion is justified or to grant planning permission on this basis.

Furthermore, I am also concerned that the Home Office has not adequately demonstrated why existing detention capacity cannot be managed more efficiently. I was told by the former Asylum Minister that many detainees at Campsfield will be foreign national offenders who have completed their custodial sentences and are awaiting removal. If that is the case, could improvements to operational processes - for example making greater use of arrangements that facilitate removal directly from prison where appropriate - reduce the demand for immigration detention? The Home Office does not seem to have provided a response to this question. While prison and immigration policy itself are not planning matters, the existence of alternatives is directly relevant where the Home Office is seeking to rely on capacity demands as its principle justification for the expansion of Campsfield.

I am further concerned about the welfare of those who would be detained at Campsfield House. Independent reviews, including Sir Stephen Shaw's inquiry into the welfare of people in detention, have highlighted the significant effects that immigration detention can have on mental health and wellbeing. Campsfield House was closed in 2018 following serious incidents, including hunger strikes, protests, an act of arson and two deaths by suicide. Whilst I acknowledge that changes have been made since then, I remain concerned that

expanding the facility would expose more people to detention which has well-documented risks to mental health. More recently, we have also seen one detainee escape from Campsfield (on Tuesday 13 July). The application has not demonstrated that alternatives to detention have been fully considered before seeking a substantial increase in detention capacity.

The application also fails to demonstrate that the effects on local infrastructure has been adequately assessed or mitigated. Increasing the site's capacity from 160 to 400 will inevitably use more water and electricity. Locally, both of these have been under significant pressure. Local developments, which have planning permission and included in the local plan, have been informed that they would be unable to connect the Grid until 2037. Other developments have been informed that there would not be enough potable water to ensure the safety of the development. This is concerning and increasing the capacity at Campsfield will only add to these pressures and needs to be seriously considered in this application.

Finally, the impact on local residents, particularly those living on Evenlode Crescent which is less than 200m away, will also be significant. These residents have represented to me that they were not adequately consulted or informed about the refurbishment of Campsfield House (phase 1). They experienced arc lights shining into their properties at night, significant journeys by HGVs on their residential cul-de-sac and significant noise disruption. The proposal represents a major increase in the size and operation of the site which has the potential to increase noise and traffic around their homes. This must be taken into consideration.

Ultimately the planning balance in this application rests on whether the claimed national need clearly outweighs the identified harms. In my opinion, the Home Office has not demonstrated that this threshold has been met and their application should therefore be rejected.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Calum Miller.

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